

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1, 3-5, 12, 13, 16, 18-19 and 21 have been amended. Claims 10, 15 and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 22-26 have been added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-9, 11-14, 16 and 18-26 are now pending in this application.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 5, 10, 18, 19 and 21 contain specific features that are allowable subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended to include the specific features recited in claim 10, and to improve its readability and clarity of the gases (and not for reasons of patentability). Claim 4 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Claims 18 and 19 have been amended to be in independent form, along with some readability and clarity changes. Thus, independent claims 1, 18, and 19 are in *prima facie* condition for allowance. Claim 13 has been amended to include the specific allowable subject matter of claim 10. Claim 13 is therefore also believed to be in condition for allowance. The remaining dependent claims, i.e., claims 2-9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20-24 and 26, ultimately depend from one of independent claims 1 and 13, and thus are likewise in condition for allowance. In short, only new claim 25 contains subject matter that the Office Action has not yet stated is allowable.

Claim objections

Claim 3 was objected to as being in improper dependent form. Applicants have amended claim 3 to address the issues raised in the Office Action, and submit that the objection has been overcome.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,164,088 to Moriguchi et al. (“Moriguchi”). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moriguchi in view of U.S. Patent 5,240,471 to Barbe et al. (“Barbe”). Claims 12 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moriguchi in view of U.S. Patent 5,720,797 to Yates et al. (“Yates”). Applicants submit that these rejections are moot with respect to all the noted claims in light of the amendments above. Insofar as this rejection can be applied to new claim 25, applicants respectfully traverse for at least the following reasons.

New claim 25 includes the limitation “gas separation equipment includes an adsorbent having Zeolites with approximately 5Å pore size and 10Å pore size, and wherein a ratio of said Zeolites with 5Å pore size is more than 80wt% and said Zeolites with 10Å pore size is less than 20wt%”, where support for this limitation can be found at least in original claim 12. The references cited in the rejection fail to suggest this feature.

The Office Action acknowledges that Moriguchi does not disclose this feature with respect to original claim 12, but argues that the zeolite size recited would be obvious in view of Yates. Applicants respectfully disagree. The Office Action states that Yates teaches that zeolites are useful as adsorbents for SF₆. Moriguchi, however, is concerned with providing an adsorption layer 202 that selectively adsorbs nitrogen gas (See col. 6, lines 28-29, col. 7, lines 10-12), not SF₆. Thus, modifying the Moriguchi system to include an adsorbent for SF₆ would be contrary to the intended purpose of Moriguchi, which is to adsorb nitrogen, and one skilled in the art would not do so. In short, there is no motivation or suggestion to make the necessary changes to Moriguchi in order to reach the claimed invention of claim 25. Indeed, the base reference suggests away.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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